

## Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

SAM-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01 IO-10 /071 W

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R 220715Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO /SECSTATE WASHDC 6536

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 9757

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MILI CH

SUBJ: IMPRESSIONS ON VISIT TO CHENG-CHOU, HONAN

SUMMARY: A RECENT VISITOR TO CHENG-CHOU WITNESSED TRUCKLOADS OF PRISONERS ON ROADS OUTSIDE THE CITY AND HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE A PROVINCIAL MEETING WHERE PARTICIPANTS LOUDLY CHEERED A TRADITIONAL OPERA PERFORMANCE. END SUMMARY

1. THE AMERICAN DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY SERVICES CENTER HERE, WHOSE WIFE'S NATIVE HOME WAS FORMERLY CHENG-CHOU, HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THIS OUT-OF-THE-WAY PROVINCIAL CAPITAL IN JULY AND HE HAS PASSED SOME OF HIS OBSERVATIONS ON TO US. IN GENERAL, THEY WERE STRUCK BY THE BLEAKNESS OF THE PLACE AND THEIR ACTIVITIES WERE CONSIDERABLY CIRCUMSCRIBED BY CAUTIOUS PUBLIC SECURITY ESCORTS. ON THE ROAD OUTSIDE THE CITY HE OBSERVED THREE TRUCKLOADS OF PRISONERS WITH HANDS TIED, PLACARDS BEHIND THEIR BACKS AND CLOSELY GUARDED BY PLA MEN WITH RIFLES. HE WAS TOLD  
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THEY WERE YOUTHS WHO HAD ILLEGALLY RETURNED AFTER BEING

SENT DOWN TO THE COUNTRYSIDE.

2. ON ANOTHER EVENING, WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THEIR GUEST HOUSE, THE COURTYARD WAS FILLED WITH BLACK LIMOUSINES AND THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY A HIGH-LEVEL PROVINCIAL MEETING IN PROGRESS. HE WAS TURNED AWAY FROM THE MEETING, BUT HIS WIFE EASILY HEARD AND RECONGIZED SEVERAL TRADITIONAL HONAN OPERA THEMES WHICH WERE CHEERED ENTHUSIASTICALLY BY THOSE AT THE MEETING. THERE AS NOT MODER PEKING REVOLUTIONARY OPERA TO BE HEARD. AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING THEY NOTICED AN OBVIOUSLY DISTINGUISHED PLA VETERAN CADRE WHO WAS BEING SHOWN CONSIDERABLE DEFERENCE; HE WORE SEVERAL MEDALS OVER THE POCKET OF HIS SHIRT AND CURIOUS STRAW SANDALS WITH TURNED-UP TOES; THE HOTEL STAFF SAID THE SHOES SIGNIFIED HE HAD BEEN ON THE LONG MARCH, BUT WOULD NOT SAY WHETHER HE WAS A HIGH-LEVEL ARMY LEADER.

3. THE VISITORS WERE STRUCK BY THE POVERTY THEY SAW ALL AROUND THEM, THE LACK OF ADEQUATE MEDICAL FACILITIES AND BY EVIDENCE THAT CLEARLY INDICATED HIGH-LEVEL CADRES WERE A CLASS APART FROM THE PEOPLE. POSTERS SEEN IN THE STREETS ON ONE OCCASION SOUGHT INFORMATION ON "ASSASSINS" WHO HAD KILLED THREE PEOPLE WHEN THEY ROBBED THE POEPL'S BANK OF CHENGCHOU OF 200,000 RMB A FEW YEARS BACK. THE THIEVES WERE BELIEVED TO BE STILL AT LARGE IN THE CITY.  
CROSS

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**TAGS:** PINT, MILI, CH  
**To:** STATE  
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